

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE AIR FORCE'S TRANSFORMATION TO AN EXPEDITIONARY CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

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Following Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force required large personnel commitments in Southwest Asia to enforce the Iraqi no-fly zones. Leadership faced developing better methods of presenting forces while fulfilling worldwide commitments. The mission was accomplished, but units were thrown together ad-hoc, deployment returns were not firm, and planning, career development, morale and readiness suffered. In response, leadership developed the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) whereby units and personnel could schedule training, education, and family events such as holidays, vacations, graduations and weddings. While the AEF culture was not immediately internalized, the groundwork proved beneficial following 9-11 when events drove the Air Force to accomplish even more with less.

Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom necessitated further cultural transformation whereby AEF-type processes would become second nature and Airmen would see deployed commitments as normal. Air Force senior leaders embraced the challenge of transforming to an expeditionary culture and successfully demonstrated many effective cultural embedding mechanisms to that end. Airmen have realized this new mindset as a job requirement. The Air Force's transition to an expeditionary culture is well on its way and offers a compelling case study where skillful senior leaders applying established concepts for organizational transformation affected cultural change.

THE AIR FORCE'S TRANSFORMATION TO AN EXPEDITIONARY CULTURE

Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles.¹

Following Operation Desert Storm, the United States Air Force was faced with maintaining a constant presence in Southwest Asia to enforce the northern and southern Iraqi no-fly zones. Although Operation Northern Watch (ONW) and Operation Southern Watch (OSW) often plodded along uneventfully, they demanded large commitments in both Airmen and materiel and drove an elevated operations tempo. Sustaining these forces while simultaneously fulfilling other worldwide operational and training commitments drove Air Force leaders to contemplate a better way of doing business. At that time, deployed organizations were largely piecemealed from many units in order to spread the burden of forming them across the Air Force. Many units and personnel did not emphasize perfect mobility readiness and when tasked for deployments at the last minute, there was a scramble to adequately train and prepare individuals. While the mission was accomplished, Airmen suffered as there was no way to predict deployment schedules and plan for the future. Similarly, personnel could depart for a forty-five day deployment only to be relieved after three or four months when their replacement was finally sent to the fight. Career development, quality of life, morale, and unit readiness all suffered.

To attack this problem, Air Force leaders developed the concept of the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF). The intent was to assign personnel to specific AEF buckets so they would always be able to predict when their next deployment tasking would fall. The concept was developed and managed by the Air Force's AEF Center and substantial progress was made in the years following the First Gulf War. "The basic concept of the AEF we use today was born of necessity after years of rotations between ONW and OSW. High 'OPSTEMPO' forced us to update our Air Force-wide system of organizing, scheduling, and presenting our forces to Combatant Commanders (COCOMs)."² Units and personnel began to realize a system under which they could schedule formal training and professional education opportunities while planning for key family events such as holidays, vacations, graduations, and even weddings. The process was beginning to solidify, but the culture lagged behind as there were still many instances where requirements were not fulfilled in a timely manner and deployment notifications were received too late. As personnel were identified for deployment, many were still surprised because they had not yet been assigned to specific AEF buckets or were being deployed outside of their bucket. They and their units were not ready for them to deploy resulting in turned back taskings

(reclamas) and the ball was kicked to another individual, or even worse, down the street to another unit. It was not unusual for notification of the right individual to occur very near the required report date, robbing the Airman of the opportunity to adequately prepare himself and his family for deployment or leaving the incumbent in place past his scheduled return date. Increasing deployment rates and the AEF construct were not really internalized among the rank and file as the normal way to do business. Deployment taskings were often viewed as unusual and unfortunate events. However, this preparatory groundwork showed its return on investment following 9-11 when operations tempo went through the ceiling and the Air Force was faced with doing even more with less. The purpose of this paper is to present some theoretical approaches to examining and changing organizational culture and to offer a compelling case study where the next step in expeditionary cultural change was the direct result of skillful senior leaders applying established leadership concepts for transforming organizations.

It is important to understand organizational culture, but also the ability of senior level leadership to change it. According to Edgar H. Shein, “Organizational cultures are created in part by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management, and sometimes even the destruction of culture.”³ He further maintains that leadership and culture should be considered together and even suggests that creating and managing culture is the only important thing that leaders do. This is especially crucial when an organization’s culture is not well-suited for the environment in which it operates. “If one wishes to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leaders create and change cultures, while managers and administrators live within them.”⁴ As a minimum, it is conceivable that leadership and organizational culture are closely intertwined supporting the argument that the use of recognized leadership principles can affect cultural change within large organizations. This is evident in the Air Force’s transformation to an expeditionary culture.

Cultural concepts hold that groups share certain things in common. Some examples are: behavioral regularities during interaction, group norms, espoused values, formal philosophy, rules of the game, climate, embedded skills, habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistic paradigms, shared meanings, and root metaphors. These concepts can largely be wrapped up in behavior, rituals, and traditions that members hold in common. Shein argues that culture adds two more key sharing elements. First, there must be some group structural stability. It lies deep below the surface and is therefore subconscious. Second, the elements are patterned or integrated. In other words, they are comprised of various deep-lying elements into a coherent whole.⁵ Think of a building foundation when conceptualizing structural stability. Then imagine the iron rebar running through the foundation when considering how cultural elements are

integrated. Schein recommends viewing culture “as the accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioral, emotional, and cognitive elements of the group members’ total psychological functioning.”⁶ Another way to view culture as it relates to organizations is “... the invisible influence of the human system within an organization. Once in place, the basic beliefs shape, guide and organize the collective thinking, actions, attitudes and related feelings within a company.”⁷ Culture functions to reduce complexity, coordinate action, and provide meaning and continuity influencing communication, motivation and identification. An organization’s productivity, viability, and success can seriously depend on its culture.⁸

According to Shein, all groups must deal with the ability to survive, grow and adapt to their environment while integrating internally for daily functioning.⁹ This requires some level of learning which, if the lessons are ingrained deeply enough, can become assumptions. “...the learning process for the group starts with one or more members taking a leadership role in proposing courses of action and as these continue to be successful in solving the group’s internal and external problems, they come to be taken for granted and the assumptions underlying them cease to be questioned or debated. A group has a culture when it has had enough of a shared history to have formed such a set of shared assumptions.”¹⁰ These begin to operate without awareness and take on their own value as they begin to define the group. They become good assumptions as they are part of the group’s successful history. This can actually become an impediment towards resolving disputes between groups because assumptions are so ingrained that they are not considered adjustable, discussable, or variable in either group.¹¹ Assumptions really lie at the foundation of organizational culture. Shein finally defines culture as, “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problem of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”¹² He points out that this definition introduces three elements which should be addressed.

First, socialization refers to the passing of cultural elements to new members of the organization. While studying these elements can allude to some cultural understanding, it tends to only scratch the surface. Deeper culture will only become obvious to new members when they gain a more permanent status and are allowed into inner circles. In fact, how newcomers learn is often more revealing of deeper assumptions than what they are initially taught. Critical situations and interviews of established members reveal more deeply held assumptions. While new members may try on their own to discover norms and assumptions in order to fit in and learn on their own, they will still go through a period of rewards and punishment at the hands of

established members. The culture survives as it teaches shared assumptions to newcomers perpetuating the mechanism of social control. Second, overt behavior is not addressed in the definition because it is largely the affect of shared experiences in the external environment. The critical assumptions should focus on things and how we perceive, feel, and think about things. This requires a deeper understanding than simply observing external behavior which may not tell us anything about deeply held cultural beliefs. Third, do large organizations have only one culture? That depends on if there are deeply lying assumptions that transcend the entire organization. If so, then there is some consistent level of organizational culture. Undoubtedly, the larger the organization, the more likely there will be subcultures. However, when the organization is stressed, common assumptions become more important.¹³

While the processes prescribed for AEF deployment became well-established, the Air Force had not yet transformed to a true expeditionary culture. So many Airmen were not assigned to specific AEF buckets, deployment demand was still relatively manageable, and senior leadership had yet to full court press for a cultural transformation. However, following 9-11, the additional demands of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom necessitated a true cultural transformation whereby AEF-like processes would become second nature, or better yet, underlying assumptions. More specifically, Airman would begin to assume regular overseas commitments as the norm rather than an anomaly. Air Force Leadership embraced the challenge of converting to an expeditionary culture and demonstrated the effectiveness of many cultural embedding and reinforcing mechanisms as described by Schein. Among these were: Leadership communicating where they will systematically pay attention; Role modeling, teaching and coaching; Organizational systems and procedures; Physical space, facades and buildings; How budgets are created; Organization design and structure; Linking rewards and punishments to criteria; and Formal statements of philosophy, values and creed.¹⁴ This analysis of Air Force Leadership examines recent Air Force changes through the lens of these cultural embedding mechanisms to help explain how leadership can, and in fact, has transformed the Air Force to an expeditionary organizational culture.

The Air Force's most recent renovation in the physical fitness program and associated monitoring systems are foundational embedding mechanisms for an expeditionary culture. As described by Schein, "One of the most powerful mechanisms ... available for communicating what they believe in or care about is what they systematically pay attention to."¹⁵ In 2003, the Air Force abandoned previous attempts to ensure physical fitness by administering an annual stationary cycle test to every Airman. That test was based on cycle resistance/workload and the Airmen's corresponding heart rate. For many reasons, some who failed were in outstanding

aerobic shape. Similarly, some who passed were sorry examples of physical fitness. Instead, Air Force leadership mandated a new physical fitness program requiring weekly workouts in a group setting combined with an annual physical fitness test sampling push-ups, sit-ups, a 1.5 mile run, and a waist measurement. Responsibilities at all leadership levels were specified and peer pressure started to play a significant role. Wings began to hold base wide fitness events such as five kilometer runs. Unit-level commanders largely embraced the program because it mandated fitness activity during the workday as opposed to leaving it for off-duty time where it competed with family and domestic attention. Combined with intramural sports, the fitness program seemed to increase productivity in the workplace and contributed to esprit décor as intended. Most importantly, as Airmen became better fit, they were better prepared to deploy and be most productive while deployed. Air Force regulatory guidance fully links the concepts of physical fitness to mission readiness.

All members of the Air Force (AF) must be physically fit to support the AF mission. Health benefits from an active lifestyle will increase productivity, optimize health, and decrease absenteeism while maintaining a higher level of readiness. The goal of the Fitness Program (FP) is to motivate all members to participate in a year-round physical conditioning program that emphasizes total fitness, to include proper aerobic conditioning, strength/flexibility training, and healthy eating. Commanders and supervisors must incorporate fitness into the AF culture to establish an environment for members to maintain physical fitness and health to meet expeditionary mission requirements and deliver a fit and ready force.¹⁶

By paying attention to physical fitness and leading this improvement, then Chief of Staff, General John P. Jumper utilized a primary embedding mechanism by establishing a formal fitness program that mandated measurement and control on a regular basis.

He also used the embedding mechanism of role modeling, teaching and coaching when he personally demonstrated his commitment to physical fitness through the military media. "...new leaders of organizations generally seem to know that their own visible behavior has great value for communicating assumptions and values to other members, especially newcomers."¹⁷ During the incipient stages, Airmen regularly witnessed General Jumper exercising through various media sources. While his physical fitness test score was not publicized, completion of General Jumper's first annual fitness assessment received service wide media attention. Leadership by example is a strong motivator for cultural change, especially when it is demonstrated by the pinnacle of organizational leadership.

As with physical fitness, Air Force professionals witnessed a steep response in personnel and medical readiness. While operations tempo surged, leadership deemed unacceptable time lost in the deployment process to attend to immunizations, prescription lens inserts for chemical

masks, annual physical exams, life insurance documentation, and countless other routine requirements. Readiness became an ever-increasing emphasis item as statistics and processing deviations from real world, exercise and higher headquarters inspection deployment lines became briefing items at wing staff meetings. Occasionally, subordinate leadership and the individuals were tasked to provide rationale for failure to accomplish specified mobility requirements. In fact, operations groups allocated resources to establish readiness flights in charge of both processing deployment taskings and maintaining readiness requirements for assigned individuals. This organizational system adjustment is an example of a cultural reinforcement mechanism and it has paid big dividends. As described by Schein, "Systems and procedures can formalize the process of 'paying attention' and thus reinforce the message that the leader really cares about certain things."¹⁸ In fact, upon completion of real world deployment processing, one airlift squadron recently yielded zero discrepancies; a nearly unheard of accomplishment in previous deployments.¹⁹

Shein describes the physical space, facades and buildings as being able to reinforce leaders' messages. "Leaders who have a clear philosophy and style often choose to embody that style in the visible manifestations of their organizations."²⁰ It is obvious from the vast mobility processing centers at both Charleston and McChord AFBs that leadership in Air Mobility Command is aggressively focused on the Airmen's expeditionary mindset. Besides the massive warehousing capability, the processes of ensuring our Airmen are tracked, processed, and equipped for deployment are now part of everyday life in the Air Force. It is engrained when they get to their first operational duty station. Additionally, these processes are exercised and tested during any preparatory exercises and higher headquarters inspections. The wings expect their Airmen to receive zero defects during an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) mobility processing line. Use of this embedding mechanism is also evident in the effort and financial investment now dedicated to the aforementioned fitness programs. New motivational software, surveyed running tracks, state of the art Health and Wellness Centers, renovated gyms, and professionally administered training regimens all attest to leadership's commitment to a fitness-backed expeditionary mindset.

General Jumper stressed, "Every Air Force member is an 'expeditionary Airman.' That means you must stay ready to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice."²¹ This statement served as part of the introduction to a recent Air Force publication entitled the Airman's Manual. This document was distributed to and accountable for by every Airmen beginning in 2004 with the intention of providing a concise guide to successfully completing tasked missions in any environment and under all conditions. Much effort was dedicated to the sections on readiness

and deployment processes. Budgeting for this document, the associated allocation of resources, and all expeditionary improvement programs are all embedding mechanisms where Air Force leaders demonstrated their commitment to the expeditionary culture change. “How budgets are created in an organization is another process that reveals leader assumptions and beliefs.”²² But besides demonstrating the commitment to cultural change by investing in and publishing the documents, Gen Jumper also made it crystal clear in the introduction that Airmen were expected to deploy. Following 9-11, there was a concerted effort to further clean up mobility discrepancies that rendered individuals non-deployable. While mobility processing and physical fitness were part of this process, they did not purge all the dead wood. Personnel who were non-deployable due to persistent medical conditions or malingering attitudes became at risk for discharge. When replacements of new mobility-ready Airmen are available, deployments can be fair-shared and evenly spread across career fields and organizations. Otherwise, the personnel who can maintain their readiness status as expected end up pulling more than their weight of the deployment load.

Still another example of Air Force leadership reinforcing transition to an expeditionary culture is Air Mobility Command (AMC) personnel redefining how to better support the war fighter with a leaner, more effective, mobility footprint while taking better care of their Airmen. Shein allows that an “organization’s structure and design can be used to reinforce leader assumptions ...”²³ Reorganizing a massive airlift operation into a more efficient fully forward-deployed footprint during wartime while better supporting the warfighter is a perfect example of how Air Force leadership is committed to transforming to the expeditionary culture. In the summer of 2005, a squadron commander from Charleston AFB, SC was operating in the mobility system to monitor his aircrews, the enroute support structure, and fulfill his own flying currency requirements. At Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, he raised concern that there was a move afoot to “normalize” intratheater airlift operations whereby all missions would be run by the Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) through a dispersed system of mobility stage managers. The existing Expeditionary Airlift Squadron (EAS), which had proven so crucial to providing tactical, crew management, and risk management oversight of transiting Air Mobility Command (AMC) crews, would go away. A deployed stage management cell would be qualified to schedule aircrews on a first-in first-out basis and provide downloaded flight planning documents from the TACC flight planners. Absent would be the deployed leadership oversight (squadron commander, director of operations and staff) so crucial to matching the right crew against the right mission in a complex combat theater. This was a step in the wrong direction. In fact, he

argued for a more robust EAS construct. He envisioned deploying a second squadron to bolster hands-on responsibility and improve capability to get the stuff to the fight.

This evolved into a fantastic case study of Air Force leadership furthering transition to an expeditionary culture. Less than one year later, that squadron commander together with another commander from McChord AFB, WA, backed by a multi-wing commissioned “Tiger Team” poised at improving aircrew utilization would take their case for a better way to do business to Scott AFB, IL. By April of 2006, they would present their recommendations to the highest levels of leadership at Air Mobility Command (AMC) including the commanders of TACC, 18 AF, and AMC.²⁴ The two largest C-17 bases, Charleston and McChord, worked together to present a unified position showing how a much more expeditionary footprint would improve the quality of intratheater airlift while freeing up aircrews for other commitments to include global mobility missions, training, professional military education, home station program management, leave and other quality of life pursuits. They advocated deploying two complete airlift squadrons, each to run an EAS in theater, one at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey and the other at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar for 120 days. Their goal was to show how their idea would be a win-win proposition for the entire air mobility operation. The concept proposed to enhance intratheater support, reduce aircrew deadhead travel, optimize effectiveness and efficiency, get 100% of the squadrons into the fight, achieve total force (Active, Reserve, and Guard components) friendly ops, improve safety with direct commander and operations officer leadership, provide full spectrum capability to include airdrop, and improve delivery reliability.²⁵ To best convey their concepts to open-minded expeditionary focused senior leadership, the wing leaders used a recently instituted Air Force continuous improvement program and cultural embedding tool known as “Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century” (AFSO 21).

Backed by the Air Force core value, “Excellence in all we do,” AFSO 21 is the new formal program to drive continual process improvement. Its intent is to improve quality and lean thinking across the board. The program offers Airmen a mindset or philosophy by which to identify and eliminate “activities, actions and policies that do not contribute to the efficient and effective operation of the Air Force.”²⁶ Bottom line, if an activity does not contribute to military utility or mission capability, the non-value added activity is eliminated resulting in improved service and better quality of life for our Airmen. There are three outcomes inherent in this approach. First, Airmen understanding the importance of their work and how it contributes to the mission will see their roles differently as they aim for increased value and reduced waste. Second, eliminating waste will help make the most of our current budget allocations. Third, the

Air Force's ability to accomplish the mission with greater agility is improved when not bogged down in wasteful processes.²⁷

Inefficiencies inherent in the existing EAS construct were rampant. Improvements were ripe for the picking, senior leadership was already partial to an expeditionary cultural change, and wing level leadership was advocating a method to improve both the business aspects and quality of life for their people. The new construct proposed a much different approach in that it would deploy two complete C-17 airlift squadrons for 120 days with 60-day offsetting swap-out dates so the two squadrons would never swap out at the same time.²⁸ Their job would be to supply all the necessary flying aircrews for the CENTCOM intratheater piece of OEF and OIF while simultaneously providing all the staff support for mission execution. That left three active duty in garrison units plus voluntary reserve participation at each home station to train and fulfill other global requirements including the inter-theater strategic airlift piece of the two EAS construct.

Prior to this, there was an equivalent of some twenty-two augmented (5-man crews) tied up in the EAS non-flying staff roles spread across at least five location. Some 11% of the available crew force was unavailable to fly due to support commitments.²⁹ Upon implementation of the two EAS construct, utilization of aircraft and mission footprint would be unchanged resulting in seamless customer support. Only the presentation of C-17 forces would be altered.³⁰ Conceptually, the EAS was to become more focused on intratheater airlift extending inbound TACC driven intertheater commercial and CONUS based strategic airlift operations cargo to downrange tactical locations. The goals were fourfold: 1) ... "continue our unimpeded support to the warfighter to enable victory in the GWOT"; 2) "Increase predictability for the long term health of the force"; 3) ... "optimize C-17 crew force utilization" and 4) ... "reduce operational risk by establishing resident AOR expertise thus mitigating aircrew fatigue and increasing ops familiarity and improving flight and ground training quality for non-deployed units."³¹ The flying wings could expect payback for these improvements in the form of a long term sustainable operations tempo including a 30-day reconstitution period following deployments which would allow for squadron members to take two weeks of leave and participate in jam-packed local training regimes before getting back to business.³² Of crucial benefit, squadron leadership would be deployed with the personnel they knew best, better enabling them to manage operational risk.

Organizationally, the proposed change would take advantage of a double loop system consisting of the open loop (intertheater) piece and the closed loop (intratheater or EAS) piece. The first is comprised of CONUS loading locations and bases in Germany. These locations

operate under traditional stage management practices supported by TACC and a few stage managers. Non-deployed crews fly these simpler intertheater missions to sustain the transoceanic bridge, swap aircraft to the CONUS for repair or scheduled maintenance, and if necessary for expanded intratheater mission requirements, can augment the EASs for the closed loop portion. The closed loop system is operated by the two EASs, forming two intratheater hubs at Incirlik, Turkey and Al Udeid, Qatar. EASs then assume mission responsibility for getting the stuff to the fight using their own crews and staff assets. Because of the requirement for maximum mission flexibility, it is important that both loops understand there is a symbiotic relationship whereby each loop may be required to augment the other as directed by command and control.³³ Under the new 2 EAS Construct efficiencies, there would be a significant increase in crew availability when needed. Instead of 115 augmented crews from garrison available to the TACC for missions, there would be 121 mostly augmented, but some modified basic crews (2 pilots, 2 loadmasters) available for the inter- and intratheater missions. Additionally, there would be a “from-garrison” and “from-EAS staff” surge capability available to take crew availability up to nearly 150.³⁴

The 17th Airlift Squadron from Charleston deployed last summer to stand up this second EAS at Al Udeid AB in Qatar. Designated the 816th EAS, their After Action Report (AAR) speaks volumes to the success of this wing level leadership generated and strategic level leadership encouraged initiative. All the expected gains seem to be realized. As a measure of reducing crew waste in the EAS structure, the 816th EAS examined utilization rates of crews and aircraft from the two major C-17 bases. They documented a crew commitment reduction of 32% enabling a significant number of personnel to attend to other duties and quality of life pursuits. The overall goal of reducing wasteful temporary duty was clearly met.³⁵ They also looked at efficiency by applying a figure of merit called “crew effort” defined as the average number of passengers, pallets, or cargo per sortie divided by the average number of crew members per mission. The 2-EAS Construct intended to capitalize on a mixture of combat basic crews and augmented crews to realize efficiencies by lowering the number of crewmembers used for each mission. The 816th calculated that each of their crewmembers delivered double the number of passengers, triple the number of pallets and quadruple the number of cargo lbs per sortie compared to other intratheater airlift operations during the same period.³⁶ From a quality of life and training perspective, personnel took post-deployment reconstitution and leave for a two week period following redeployment. Then they received appropriate flying, ground and simulator training for some two weeks before resuming TACC directed overseas mission commitments.³⁷ Undoubtedly, there will be improvements to the

evolving 2-EAS Construct, but the first deployment went extremely well, paid big dividends and reinforced senior leadership's and subordinates' commitment to the Air Force's evolving expeditionary culture.

Another more recent commitment to expeditionary culture was obviated when senior leadership directed that deployment and temporary duty information be tracked on an individual basis. It is obvious that promotion and special selection boards will seek to reward individuals who have served in overseas deployment roles. This is a perfect example of establishing specific criteria whereby leaders can target rewards and higher status. "Leaders can quickly get across their own priorities, values, and assumptions by consistently linking rewards and punishments to the behavior they are concerned with."³⁸ Expect that statistics will eventually show a direct correlation between commitment to the expeditionary culture and performance reports and promotion results. According to the chief of officer promotions at the Air Force Personnel Center, "... officer selection boards are charged by the secretary of the Air Force to consider the 'whole person,' officers need to ensure their entire record is correct to include deployments."³⁹ As mentioned previously, observed criteria for allocation of rewards and status represent a cultural-embedding mechanism according to Schein. "... if the founders or leaders are trying to ensure that their values and assumptions will be learned, they must create a reward, promotion, and status system that is consistent with those assumptions. Whereas the message initially gets across in the daily behavior of the leader, it is judged in the long run by whether the important rewards are allocated consistently with that daily behavior."⁴⁰ Squadron level leadership deployed with their own personnel is in the perfect position to publicly recognize their people for expeditionary related exceptional performance both through formal and informal awards processes. That translates into better quality records of performance. Senior leadership recognized this as a tool to further shift into the expeditionary culture. At any rate, the expectations are very clear. Step up for deployments and the associated accolades or risk being left behind your peers.

Finally, Air Force leadership has frequently used "formal statements of organizational philosophy, values, and creed" to spread the expeditionary culture message. "Such public statements may have a value for the leader as a way of emphasizing special things to be attended to in the organization, as values around which to rally the troops, and as reminders of fundamental assumptions not to be forgotten."⁴¹ For example, in a recent Letter to Airmen, CSAF Gen T. Michael Moseley described his expectations for "Shaping and Transforming the Force." Among the many issues addressed, he emphasized the importance of our Airmen and their families, the importance of fighting an expeditionary war while significantly drawing down

the force, the need to evenly spread deployment taskings across the board, and ensure every Airman is assigned to a specific AEF bucket.⁴² Similarly, the CSAF released a message in May, 2005 (subject “ALL AIRMEN ARE IN THE AEF”) emphasizing the Air Force’s commitment to the AEF, its importance for providing quality forces to combatant commanders, and the benefits it provides in predictability and stability. The message also directed commanders to ensure that all their Airmen realize that they are part of the AEF and ready to go during their deployment window.⁴³ Quality of life and retention are largely about planning, expectations, and predictability. Each of these issues smacks of a deployed force mindset and furthers the Air Force-wide transformation to an expeditionary culture.

The cultural seed is spread and has taken root. Airmen who have joined since 9-11 cannot have missed the message. It’s second nature to them. Most of the more senior officers and NCOs have realized the new culture as well. Those who have not may very soon find their longevity in the Air Force curtailed. This is not a threat; it is simply a requirement of the job as it stands today. Air Force leaders understand unforeseen and temporary discrepancies due to medical-related problems and the resultant scheduling turmoil can be dealt with in the AEF mechanism. They work hard with all supporting agencies to correct mobility deficiencies in their personnel especially when there is honest effort on the individual’s part to be mobility-ready. Transition to an expeditionary culture is well on its way. Whether by design or simply the result of skillful intuitive leadership, this is the direct result of senior level leaders’ use of cultural embedding and reinforcing mechanisms. Nicely done!

Endnotes

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² AEF Center Education, Training & Partnership Branch, *Wing Leadership Guide to the AEF* (Langley AFB, VA: Air and Space Expeditionary Force Center, September 2005), 6.

³ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1992), 5.

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⁷ Sonja A. Sackmann, *Success Factor: Corporate Culture* (Gutersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006), 29.

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⁹ Schein, 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

¹¹ Ibid., 12.

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¹⁴ Ibid., 231.

¹⁵ Ibid., 231.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Fitness Program*, Air Force Instruction 10-248 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 25 September 2006), 1; available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/pubfiles/af/10/afi10-248/afi10-248.pdf>; Internet; accessed 15 October 2006.

¹⁷ Schein, 240.

¹⁸ Ibid., 248.

¹⁹ Lt Col Lenny J. Richoux, *816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron After Action Report – 1 June - 1 September 2006*, 5.

²⁰ Schein, 250.

²¹ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Airman's Manual*, Air Force Manual 10-100 (Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Air Force, 1 June 2004) i.

²² Schein, 239.

²³ Ibid., 247.

²⁴ Lt Col Brian Robinson and Lt Col Blaine Holt, "C-17 Expeditionary Transformation TWO EAS CONOPS" briefing, 5 Apr 2006, 1, received via e-mail from Lt Col Lenny Richoux, 7 Jan 2007.

²⁵ Lt Col Blaine Holt, "C-17 Expeditionary Warfighting Transformation" briefing, 8, received via e-mail from Lt Col Blaine Holt, 30 Dec 2006.

²⁶ The Honorable Michael W. Wynne and General T. Michael Moseley, "Presentation to the Armed Services Committee United States House of Representatives – Fiscal Year 2007 Air Force Posture," 1 Mar 2006 taken from Joint Processes and Landpower Development (Air Force Service Focused Readings) 8 Feb -7 Mar 07: 145-146.

²⁷ Ibid., 146.

²⁸ Robinson and Holt, 5.

²⁹ Ibid., 6.

³⁰ Ibid., 2.

³¹ Ibid., 3-4.

³² Ibid., 5.

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ Ibid., 9.

³⁵ Richoux, 7.

³⁶ Ibid., 7-8.

³⁷ Ibid., 32.

³⁸ Schein, 242.

³⁹ Air Force Personnel Center News Service, "Airmen should verify deployment credit," 15 November 2005, available from http://www.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?storyID=123012933; internet; accessed 15 Oct 2006.

⁴⁰ Schein, 243.

⁴¹ Ibid., 251-252.

⁴² General T. Michael Moseley, "Letter to Airmen: Shaping and Transforming the Force," 23 August 2006, available from <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/csaf.asp?id=262>; Internet; accessed 15 Oct 2006.

⁴³ AEF Center Education, Training & Partnership Branch, 158.